

On Troop Commitment

Senate Panel's Resolution Is Said To Reflect Concern, Not Isolationism

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WASHINGTON, Nov. 24—A think so. In the growing sentimentality of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, they point out, there is a resolution stating little of the traditional aversion to be the sense of the Senate of "entangling alliances" coun- that, in the future, United States armed forces should not be committed to hostilities on foreign territory without "af- firmative action by Congress."

Tuesday, in a re- port on the resolu- tion such as the

News Analysis committee, with two additional votes, recommend- ed that any future resolution such as the Gulf of Tonkin reso- lution of August, 1964, "author- ize" the President to use armed forces and "not merely express approval of undefined action to be taken by the President."

The report also said the resolution should be explicit as to the kind of action authorized, the place and the purpose of its use, and contain a time limit, "thereby assuring Congress the opportunity to review its decision."

Without waiting to see the report, President Johnson dis- missed the committee action. He has his own views, he said in his news conference last week, "about really what" the resolution would achieve.

Johnson Mistake Seen

Many Senators, and not merely those on the committee, think the President is making a mistake in treating the resolu- tion so cavalierly. They concede that the question of the Presi- dent's authority to use the armed forces in the carrying out of foreign policy is one that has divided the executive and legis- lative branches almost since the beginning of the Republic, and one on which it is possible to marshal historical evidence and scholarly argument on either side.

Nevertheless, these Senators contend that what the commit- tee has done transcends this question, at least so far as the success of Mr. Johnson's Ad- ministration is concerned. The committee, these Senators ar- gue, has not simply advocated a reversion to an earlier constitu- tional theory and practice.

More important, it has laid before the President the most tangible evidence of a condition of mind, an attitude, that has been taking shape gradually for some years and that has finally hardened with the extension and intensification of the Viet- nam war. This attitude, it is maintained, has already had some damaging by-products and could have more if the Presi- dent continues to ignore it.

This attitude, in simplest terms, can be stated thus:

Swing of Pendulum

Gradually since the turn of the century and rapidly since 1950, Presidents, for reasons that often seemed plausible and with the acquiescence of Con- gress, have assumed, and some- times usurped, authority in for- eign affairs particularly in the use of the armed forces beyond the letter and the spirit of the Constitution. With this accre- tion of power, which, they ar- gued, was either "inherent" in their office or rightfully de- volved upon it because of the "expertise," the Presidents have dangerously overextended the nation's military and eco- nomic commitments.

Many members of Congress are now convinced that it is time to reverse this trend, to insist on fuller consultation with Congress, and, where the use of the armed forces in conflict is concerned, to require "affirma- tive" action by Congress.

Does this mean that a swing of the pendulum back to isola- tionism has already begun?

stroyers by North Vietnamese torpedo boats.

Mr. Bundy said the Adminis- tration had always anticipated — and as a matter of common prudence should have antici- pated — the possibility that things might take a more dras- tic turn. Therefore, he said, it had been thought wise to have a resolution ready seeking an affirmation of the desires and intent of Congress in that event. That was simply normal plan- ning, he explained.

Prior Preparation

But the committee had not been told of this prior prepa- ration of the resolution by Secretary of State Dean Rusk when he testified after the at- tack. Some committee members now wonder whether the Ad- ministration had not already made a policy determination to enlarge the United States forces and was waiting for an incident that would make it easily acceptable to Congress without debate.

In its report the committee said:

"Foreign policy is not an end in itself. . . . We conduct foreign policy for a purpose ex- ternal to itself, the purpose of securing democratic values in our own country. These values are largely expressed in pro- cedures. . . . When we set aside democratic procedures in mak- ing our foreign policy, we are undermining the purpose of that policy."

What they want, many "in- ternationalist" Senators say, is a stricter sense of proportion and a harder set of priorities.

"We can't continue to feed, finance and fight for this per- centage of the world's popula- tion," says Senator Stuart Sym- ington, Democrat of Missouri. "It is not isolationism; it is just realism."

"There is a feeling we are overextended," says Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, "that we can't achieve safety for the world when we can't bring safety to our own cities. . . . But I think it would be tragic if we took too narrow and limited a view of our role in the world. The answer is not to withdraw but to find other ways of doing things. We want an interde- pendent and not a dependent relationship with other na- tions."

Comment By Cooper

Senator John Sherman Cooper, Republican of Kentucky, says Vietnam has given rise to a feeling that "we cannot man- age every unfortunate situation that develops over the world."

"We cannot do it by force unless our own security is threatened," he says. "There is a fear that the executive branch will unnecessarily in- volve this country in war."

Senator Cooper attributes the whipsawing suffered by many Administration bills to the fears and resentments generated by the war and what many legis- lators regard as the overexten- sion of United States commit- ments.

Acting out of a mood of frus- tration, he believes, Congress readily agreed to deep cuts in the President's foreign aid re- quests; abolished the Penta- gon's authority to guarantee Export-Import Bank loans for arms sales to underdeveloped nations; restricted loans to countries trading with North Vietnam, and insisted on budget cuts before considering the 10 per cent tax surcharge. Many Senators agree with him.

Behind the commitments res- olution, however, there is not only deep concern about what President Johnson has done with his powers but also deep suspicion of his methods.

For example, in September, 1966—two years after the Ton- kin Gulf resolution—Assistant Secretary of State William P. Bundy told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in secret session that he had prepared several contingent drafts of the resolution some time prior to the attack on United States de-